



JULY 22, 2020

**THE HONORABLE NANCY PELOSI**  
SPEAKER

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Washington, DC 20515

**THE HONORABLE MITCH MCCONNELL**  
MAJORITY LEADER

United States Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**THE HONORABLE KEVIN MCCARTHY**  
MINORITY LEADER

United States House of Representatives  
2468 Rayburn House Office Building  
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**THE HONORABLE CHUCK SCHUMER**  
MINORITY LEADER

United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

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Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader McCarthy,  
and Minority Leader Schumer,

**We are at a pivotal moment in our nation's history.** We began the year committed to protecting human civilization and beating the ten-year clock counting down to massive, irreparable climate disruption. Three months in, an unimaginable public health emergency of COVID-19 has been accompanied by a profound economic crisis and a national reckoning with racial inequity faced by communities of color. These communities have long suffered disproportionately from air pollution and other toxic exposure and are now getting hit hardest by the health and economic impacts of this pandemic. As mayors and local leaders, we stand on the front lines of this moment – and we are determined to meet it with strength, resilience, resolve, and bold action to protect our planet and build a more just future for all Americans.

So far, Congress has passed important legislation to respond to the pandemic, invest in our small businesses, support working families, and increase our testing capacity. But these





bills, while critical, remain incomplete. Our nation and our cities need our representatives in Washington D.C. to move forward with a bold and innovative recovery package that takes direct, strategic steps to lift up our most vulnerable residents and communities.

**We need that kind of approach to continue managing the fallout from COVID-19 – much the same way we focus on equity and fairness in our work to tackle the climate crisis.**

Climate Mayors – a bipartisan network of over 450 U.S. mayors – is playing a leading role to preserve our environment, create good-paying green jobs, invest in clean air, clean water, and clean energy, and uphold the goals of the Paris Agreement at the local level. This commitment remains steadfast even in these times of turbulence and turmoil, and we will continue to prioritize policies and programs that help build for a better, more sustainable tomorrow.

As elected officials weigh the responses that incentivize a just, equitable, and sustainable economic recovery from this crisis, leaders in Congress should look no further than the recommendations from Climate Mayors attached to this letter. We lay out the core building blocks of a healthy, dynamic, fair economy founded on a level playing field – emphasizing innovation and infrastructure, lower energy costs, greater access to clean energy, and increased investment in public transit. We possess one of the greatest opportunities for economic growth and the reduction of greenhouse gases our generation has ever seen – and we have to seize it.

Cities across America have long demonstrated that economic growth and environmental stewardship go hand in hand – and now, our federal government can show the world that investments in a zero-carbon economy are investments in the future of our workforce, the well-being of generations, and the resilience of our infrastructure and public spaces. This moment demands that we accelerate our efforts to drive ambitious, systemic change.

Times of crisis can lead to confusion, or clarity. We Climate Mayors are expressing to our congressional leadership a shared clarity that we must tackle these crises together based on the following principles:





- 01 BUILD FOR A BETTER FUTURE** Returning to the status quo is not sufficient in meeting the challenges of climate change and inequities in our society. We must increase our resolve and ambition to reinvest in America's communities.
- 02 LEAD WITH EQUITY** Federal investments in our municipalities must prioritize those communities who have been left behind, and frontline communities and people of color who have been disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change and COVID-19.
- 03 PRIORITIZE MULTIPLE BENEFITS** The best investments will create jobs, strengthen community cohesion and resilience, and improve health outcomes in our cities and towns.

Cities throughout the United States are under tremendous pressure. In the face of the immediate crises – as well as the omnipresent threat of climate change – we encourage Congress to look to our local governments and communities to find meaningful solutions to these shared challenges. If fully funded, effectively implemented, and flexible enough to adapt locally, the policies highlighted in the Annex attached will have a lasting impact on our ability to meet the scope and scale of the challenges before us.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. We look forward to working with you to build a better future behind a clear vision for protecting the environment and making our economy work for everyone.

Respectfully,

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## ANNEX

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Climate Mayors across the United States support the following programs and tools that will aid in a just, equitable and resilient economic recovery, and prioritize the health and wellbeing of Americans, put people back to work, and create cleaner, more livable communities. This list is indicative only.

### 01. INVEST IN FAMILIES, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Reauthorize and expand the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program to enable cities to invest in programs and technologies that reduce energy costs and increase sustainability.<sup>1</sup>

- **Success Story:** Cincinnati, Ohio used its EECBG funds to achieve \$1.1 million in annual energy savings to the city, while laying the groundwork for the Green Cincinnati Plan that aims to achieve 100% renewable energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050.<sup>2</sup>

Increase capacity for programs like the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) to reduce energy costs, improve health, and increase resilience, especially in low- and moderate-income communities. A recent report by the Department of Energy (DOE) noted that every \$1 invested in weatherization yields over \$4 in energy and non-energy benefits.<sup>3</sup> In addition, every \$1 spent on hazard mitigation can save the nation \$6 in future disaster costs.<sup>4</sup>

- **Success Story:** Denver Housing Authority renovated 2,500 homes over two years, resulting in annual savings of 2,200 MWh of electricity, 194,000 therms of natural gas, and 20 million gallons of water.<sup>5</sup>
- **Success Story:** After Hurricane Harvey, Houston increased building code regulations to require that all new and redeveloped structures be elevated higher than required by the previous code. As a result, each newly developed or redeveloped home has the potential to save upward of \$50,000 in rebuilding costs from potential future flooding.

Invest in recycling infrastructure as cities experience significant increases in waste management costs with no local recycling markets to support landfill diversion.

- **Success Story:** Cities like Austin, Texas set ambitious targets for reducing waste and increasing reuse and recycling, with a 90% reduction in landfill materials and zero waste by 2040 through measures like a universal recycling ordinance that requires properties to provide recycling to tenants and employees.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.usmayors.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/0227-report-eecbgsurvey.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/oes/citywide-efforts/climate-protection-green-cincinnati-plan>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2019/07/f64/WAP-Fact-Sheet-2019.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nibs.org/news/381874/National-Institute-of-Building-Sciences-Issues-New-Report-on-the-Value-of-Mitigation.htm>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/771/documents/EQ/CEP/Denver-Housing-Authority-Case-Study.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/transforming-waste-tool/zero-waste-case-study-austin>







Build and expand upon local workforce training programs geared toward clean technology, and designing them in collaboration with local jurisdictions, unions, community-based organizations, and other relevant industry stakeholders to ensure a newly trained workforce meets the needs of the local economy.

- **Success Story:** Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice – the oldest environmental justice organization in Michigan – runs the Future Build program, which provides training in solar installation, residential and commercial construction, and lead abatement, and actively helps to match property owners with those trained.<sup>7</sup>

## 02. FOCUS ON THE FUTURE OF ENERGY, TRANSPORTATION, AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Prioritize programs which support clean, sustainable transit to meet the needs of essential workers and offset significant budget shortfalls, especially in light of the extraordinary pressure these systems are under. Notably, transit ensures that 30% of essential workers get to their jobs, and transit workers themselves are on the front line of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>8</sup>

- **Success Story:** Indianapolis, Indiana received a \$25 million Capital Investment Grant from the Federal Transit Authority and has used it to connect its central business district with communities including the University of Indianapolis and running through the densest parts of the city, within a quarter mile of more than 50,000 residents and nearly 150,000 jobs.<sup>9</sup>

Expand programs and policies in support of building decarbonization; increased manufacturing and adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) and EV infrastructure; and the deployment of renewable energy, as well as grid modernization and carbon capture utilization and storage (CCUS) technologies allowing cities to aggressively reduce emissions and pollution related to health problems.

- **Success Story:** Hundreds of cities have been ramping up their efforts to transition to EVs, including Charlotte, NC and Austin, TX, who have been steadily increasing the number of EVs in their municipal fleets through their participation in the Climate Mayors EV Purchasing Collaborative. To date, over 3200 EVs have been purchased through the Collaborative.<sup>10</sup>
- **Success Story:** Cities throughout the country, including Blacksburg, VA, Boise, ID, Columbia, SC, and Fayetteville, AR, are taking concrete steps to accelerate the transition to clean energy and have committed to achieving 100% renewable energy goals. Since 2015, over 150 U.S. local governments have made renewable energy deals representing over 8,280 MW in renewables transactions.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> <https://detroitenvironmentaljustice.org/futurebuild/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/app/uploads/2020/04/SGA-T4A-Lessons-from-the-2009-Stimulus.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.indygo.net/red-line/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://driveevfleets.org/what-is-the-collaborative/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://cityrenewables.org/transaction-tracker/>





Increase tree canopy and urban green space to enhance equity, climate mitigation and adaptation, and to minimize the urban heat island effect and energy demand for cooling.

- **Success Story:** The District of Columbia's Urban Tree Canopy Plan set a goal of covering 40% of the District with a healthy tree canopy by 2032. The District estimates that its canopy cover would capture and store enough carbon equivalent to 105,000 cars on the road, while providing much needed shade, air quality, and job opportunity improvements to local communities.

Catalyze projects that meet specific climate, resilience, and equity criteria through an infrastructure bank and/or green infrastructure bonds to enable cities to better leverage private investment and make much needed investments in existing and new infrastructure.

- **Success Story:** The City of Orlando, Florida established its own revolving loan fund by issuing a \$17.5 million green bond to undertake municipal energy efficiency projects. To date, the City has invested-in and retrofitted 56 of its most energy intensive buildings, saving over \$2 million per year to both pay back the bond and reinvest back into the fund.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <https://betterbuildingssolutioncenter.energy.gov/partners/orlando-fl>



## ABOUT CLIMATE MAYORS

Representing 74 million Americans from 48 states, Climate Mayors is a peer-to-peer network of **461 U.S. city mayors** who have committed to fighting climate change. Originally founded in 2014, the network's ranks swelled to almost 400 mayors in response to the Trump administration's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement.

**Climate Mayors commit to taking ambitious action to meet each of their cities' current climate goals, while working together towards achieving our national Paris targets.**

Climate Mayors is founded and Chaired by Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, and Co-Chaired by Mayors Sylvester Turner (Houston) and Martin J. Walsh (Boston). **For more information, please visit:**

**[WWW.CLIMATEMAYORS.ORG](http://WWW.CLIMATEMAYORS.ORG)**

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